

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 DRC-01

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O 032030Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5792

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY

CINCSO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 4507

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO, ES

SUBJECT: HONDURAN REACTION TO GOES DENUNCIATION OF BOGOTA PACT

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 4451

1. THE GOM HAS CONFINED PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS ON THE HONDURAS/
EL SALVADOR TALKS TO A COMMUNIQUE QUOTED IN REFTEL. BASICALLY,
COMMUNIQUE SAYS THE HONDURAN NEGOTIATING POSITION REMAINS
UNCHANGED, THAT SETTLEMENT OF OTHER ISSUES IS DEPENDENT ON
RESOLUTION OF BORDER DEMARCATION AND STRESSES HONDURAN
ADHERENCE TO THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES.

2. MEDIA COMMENT, WITH THE OBVIOUS EXCEPTION OF EL CRONISTA,
WHICH IS CHURNING OUT ITS USUAL TENDENTIOUS STORIES, HAS BEEN
RESTRAINED AND HAS NOT SOUGHT TO ENVENOM THE ATMOSPHERE. THE
PRESS CARRIED STORIES EMANATING FROM GUATEMALA AND SAN SALVADOR
THAT THERE WAS A PRESIDENTIAL MEETING IN JALAPA AND QUERIED
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THE CHIEF OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE OF THE ARMED FORCES

ABOUT THE MEETING. HE REPORTEDLY STATED THAT HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE MEETING BECAUSE THE GENERAL HAD BEEN CONFERRING WITH HIS MINISTERS IN PREPARATION FOR HIS DECEMBER 4 SPEECH.

3. THE MAJOR CONCERN OF THE MEDIA HAS BEEN THAT THE GOES HAS PICKED THIS MOMENT TO DENOUNCE THE BOGOTA PACT. THE MOVE IS GENERALLY CONDEMNED AS BEING COUNTER TO THE ENTIRE PHILOSOPHY OF WORKING WITHIN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM TO BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES. IN ADDITION, IT HAS ALSO CAUSED THE MEDIA OF OTHER SECTORS TO EXPRESS MUCH MORE PESSIMISM ABOUT THE POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF THE BILATERAL TALKS. FOR EXAMPLE, LIBERAL PARTY LEADER CARLOS ROBERTO REINA ISSUED A DECLARATION THAT APPEARED IN LA PRENSA WHICH STATED THAT HONDURANS SHOULD NOT BE ALARMIST BUT THAT THE GOES ACTION IN DENOUNCING THE PACT IS AN INDICATION OF SALVADOR'S BELLICOSE ATTITUDE AND UNWILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY.

4. COMMENT: THE RELATIVE LACK OF RUMOR IS PROBABLY CAUSED BY A COMBINATION OF FACTORS. THERE SEEMS LITTLE QUESTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING NOTHING TO INFLAME PUBLIC OPINION AND IS PLAYING THE ISSUE IN LOW KEY. FURTHERMORE, THE MEDIA AND OTHER GROUPS HAVE NOT BEEN ATTEMPTING TO INCREASE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION BY UNFOUNDED SPECULATION. ANOTHER FACTOR OF IMPORTANCE IS THE PETROLEUM SHORTAGE AND ITS ATTENDANT PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN RECEIVING AN INORDINATE AMOUNT OF PUBLICITY AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO STORIES ON THE TALKS. FINALLY, DECEMBER 4 IS THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1972 COUP AND GENERAL LOPEZ IS SCHEDULED TO MAKE A SPEECH TO THE NATION ON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE REGIME AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE. AS COULD BE EXPECTED, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION IN MANY CIRCLES ABOUT WHAT HE WILL PROPOSE. ALL OF THESE FACTORS TAKEN TOGETHER MAY EXPLAIN THE RELATIVE LACK OF TENSION AND RUMOR-MONGERING CONCERNING EL SALVADOR AND THE TALKS.

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